Stephen Ives Langmaid

James Patterson McBaine*

Stephen Ives Langmaid was born in Salem, Massachusetts, on July 31, 1884. He died on October 29, 1940, at his home near Lafayette, California, a place in the country near Berkeley to which the family had recently moved in order to give him the quiet and peace of the countryside. He was the son of Frank Augustus and Caroline Ives Langmaid of Salem, Massachusetts, who were members of old New England families. Professor Langmaid was educated in the public schools of Salem and at Harvard University. He received an A. B. degree from Harvard in 1906, an M. A. degree in 1907, and the degree of LL. B., cum laude, in 1911. From 1906 until the autumn of 1908, when he entered the Harvard Law School, he was associated with his father in the lumber business at Salem. Shortly after he received his law degree on June 14, 1911, he married Alice Starr Richardson, a native of Grass Valley, California. He is survived by his wife and one son, Frank Ives Langmaid, B. S. California, 1938, M. B. A. Stanford, 1940.

Professor Langmaid came West almost immediately after his graduation from the Harvard Law School and was admitted to the California Bar in 1911. He became associated with the law firm of Page, McCutchen, Knight and Olney. He remained with that firm for about a year, leaving in 1913 to establish his own office in Oakland, California.

His desire for an academic career, however, was stronger than his liking for the active practice, and in the autumn of 1913 he accepted a professorship at the University of Montana Law School where he remained for three years. In 1916 he resigned from that law school to accept a professorship at Tulane University Law School. He remained at Tulane for five years and in 1921 accepted a call to the University of Missouri Law School, where he held a professorship from 1921 to 1928. During 1927-28 he served with distinction

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as Acting Dean of the University of Missouri Law School. Resigning his professorship at Missouri in 1928, he became visiting professor of law at the University of Chicago for the next two years. In 1930 he returned to California, where he had commenced his career in the legal profession, to accept a professorship in the School of Jurisprudence of the University of California, which he held until his untimely death.

These are the significant events, dates, and places in Stephen Langmaid's career. They serve to identify him but do little to describe his fine character and useful professional life of nearly thirty years. He was a man who believed in and adhered to the highest principles of honorable conduct in all his relations with his fellow men. He was considerate of his colleagues, his students, and of all persons in every walk of life with whom he came in contact. He was a man of fine appearance and dignified demeanor. He never stooped to cheap or tawdry means to attract others. He was a modest man. He was sociable. He had a friendly and cheerful disposition and scrupulously observed the amenities of life. A delightful companion, he had a wide circle of friends in many parts of the country. Admiration and respect were accorded to him by all who knew him. He was a man of moderate temperament and sought improvement in human relations and institutions but his knowledge of mankind's struggles for better conditions, with which he was in full sympathy, had convinced him that real progress is made slowly. He neither ignored the wisdom of the past nor accepted as perfect the thinking of the hour. He was a man of convictions but not one who sought to enforce his views upon others or who gave offense when he did not agree with his colleagues, friends and close acquaintances.

In the classroom he was an excellent teacher. There his fine analytical mind and gift of clear expression made him respected and popular wherever he taught. He thoroughly prepared his material for each hour spent in the classroom. Always taking his work seriously and giving to it his very best efforts, he was never contented with a superficial examination of any legal problem. On the contrary, he familiarized himself with the literature of his subject and painstakingly weighed the reasons for and against existing rules of law. He was no pedant or doctrinaire but believed the law to be a powerful factor in civilized life and that it should be moulded and changed from time to time to serve man's needs. His teaching method was essentially dialectical and not expository. In his youth he had
taken advantage of his opportunities for a broad, liberal education and in his maturity he continued to grow in learning and understanding. An engaging personality, sound learning and skillful use of the Socratic method of teaching made him one of the best law teachers of his time.

He taught many subjects in the law school curriculum but did his most extensive work in the fields of Contracts, Equity, and Suretyship. His contributions to legal literature were of a high quality. They appear in the Missouri Law Bulletin and in the Harvard, Illinois, Michigan and California Law Reviews. He wrote not merely descriptively on legal matters, but about difficult questions in the field of his teaching with painstaking analysis. His writings reveal sound scholarship and the dominant analytical quality of a well trained legal mind. He was the author of a leading casebook on Suretyship, published in 1928, which was highly commended by other scholars in that field.

Serving well and faithfully his day and generation, he made valuable contributions to every institution of learning where he held a professorship. A delightful colleague and an inspiration to his students, he will be sorely missed by his former colleagues and students of the places where he has taught.

Stephen Langmaid was a gentleman and a scholar and the day of his passing was a sad one for his many staunch friends and his devoted family.